

This was an interview with one of the board members of PRIDE

What exactly is your position at PRIDE?

I am the student government representative for PRIDE, which means I have to go to all the student government meetings, well the general student government meeting, which is every other week. It meets during PRIDE so I have to miss it every other week, which sucks, and um the thing is student government is structured so that the exofficio organizations, which are under Diversity Advocacy receive a special amount of money. We pool from that money as a result of being part of Diversity Advocacy, and they want us to come to the government meetings to hold us accountable for that money, which I guess makes sense, but the thing is, we are not allowed to vote in any student government matters, the exofficio members are not allowed to vote. This happened about 3 years ago when one of the presidents then made a power grab and basically said, "well yeah I mean the exofficio organizations don't come to enough meetings so they should be allowed to vote." Which is funny because if we don't come to more than 2 meetings in a like um whole year, we have to step down from our position, and if we don't come to 3 we get our funding revoked. This happened to BSU last year because of a series of miscommunications

BSU? Black Student Union?

They got their funding revoked because they didn't come to 3 student government meetings. So the fact that we can't vote is entirely shitty. So its really frustrating to sit there and listen to all of what's going on and not be able to participate really. I don't know why we're there. So I get to go and witness the really startling inefficiency of that particular bureaucracy. It really makes me want to kill myself for about 2 hours every week. But luckily, since I go, we get funding. And um well that's good.

AW, You're not going to be able to eat your lunch

Oh, I will.

Um well lets see...Yeah when I talked to [the co-president] he said you guys were non-voting members and there was some sort of gap and I didn't know what he meant by that so yeah, that makes sense now. So all you have to go to is 3 a year or 3 a semester?

No, we have to go to all of them. In order to get kicked out, we have to miss 3 a year.

Miss 3. And they only happen every other week? Ok

(non verbal response) But they usually start at 7:30 and they usually go til like 10...

Wow

...because yeah. Hopefully they go til 9 we're crossing our fingers but...the student council representatives get paid to be there. We don't. (laughs)

This is the exofficios? Or the representatives of the RSOs?

Those are the same thing.

Other than the ones under Diversity Advocacy.

Those are the only RSOs that are represented in Student Government.

Really?

Yeah, um (laughs) Other than the sorority and fraternity members who make up most of the senators but um...that's just how it works.

So, about how many people are there?

About 20, 25 depending on the day.

And other than the exofficios, everyone else is paid?

To be there.

That's really weird. Are they voted in?

Yeah...

Kind of...but nobody really cares?

I actually ran for senator last year, um the party with the shinier business cards won so...

Oh, I see.

You know.

Um, also it seems like, just nobody would care enough to like really vote

Yeah, I know, it's a really big problem. No one really knows what student government really does. Which is funny because they actually do a lot...of really important things, but no one knows about it so...

Yeah. I remember last year there was somebody in one of my classes, who...um...god I can't remember, I can't for the life of me remember, what...

[name]?

No, no, no it was an African American woman who was running for something, something student government

Oh [name]?

Yeah [name]. Yeah and she was in couple of my sociology classes, and she's roommates with one of my good friends on speech team, but she was talking about how people should vote for her, and I was just like, "ok, whatever" like it wasn't even a matter of what do you stand for? What's going to change? It was just, "I know you. I'll vote for you." It's like a popularity contest I guess.

Oh yeah. And the Sororities who run together, always win. So, it's just like real life. The people with the money always win.

Oh.

Its awesome.

That type of social networking is important then; its just who you know. Of course its important, its important in every aspect of life...

Another thing that I do, is um you know, be on the board, which is actually more work than doing the student government meetings. Like we're having our year, end of semester retreat, coming up here at the end of next weekend, and we have to plan our entire next semester in one day...

Oh

...It sucks so badly. But we meet, you know, before PRIDE for the board meeting every week and plan...

Before PRIDE?

...yeah right before PRIDE, usually at 5:30 and then...or 6, and then we plan the next 3 weeks at each of those, to make sure we have everything and we're hosting a conference next semester, we're also planning...

It was supposed to be this semester

...Yeah, but it got postponed because there wasn't enough interest. We're going to the "Big Gay Conference" which you should go to because it's amazing. Anyone can sign up, its 50 dollars but you go there for 3 days.

And its second semester?

Yeah, its at the beginning in January. We just leave for a weekend, basically. And uh, its like 2,500 gay college students take over a town (laughs) and have workshops and dances and Margret Cho came last year and preformed; it was amazing.

When you say workshops, what do you mean?

Like um, lets see, workshops I went to last year

Like, "How to be Gay?"

(laughs) no...I mean, well yeah... but there's 8 or 9 little session times throughout 3 days and at any given time there's like 4 different workshops happening, and you can choose which ones you want to go to, the ones I went to were, gay issues and protests, um you know how to be safe, and

what to expect in a protest situation, queer scholarship in higher levels of academia, um ah, transgendered issues in bathrooms and public areas um...I went to a really good seminar on ummmmmmm... BDSM and safer sex practices um, with in different circles...there are a lot of women's issues, you know.

It sucks that you have to choose, or do they do in rounds?

They don't repeat but usually, there will be 4 very different ones meeting so you choose the one you like best. We try to schedule it so that there's someone from our little group at all of them. So we can talk about it later. We write summaries of what we learned.

That's cool, that sounds fun. Maybe I'll go to that, but with speech team, I don't know. But that's true for everyone, everybody always has something else going on....Ok...With the meetings, how big of a role do you play in planning meetings? Because technically, I mean, you're a board member